

REMARKS

Claims 1-3 and 5-18 are pending in the application. Claims 1-3, 5 and 16 stand rejected. Claims 6-15 are withdrawn. Claim 4 is canceled. Claims 17 and 18 have been added. No new matter is added. In light of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks, Applicants earnestly solicit favorable reconsideration.

Specification Objections

The title of the invention stands objected to as not being descriptive. Applicants have amended the title of the invention.

Although not objected to, Applicants have also amended Table 4 in paragraph [0124] to correct a typographical error.

On the Merits

Claim Rejections - 35 U.S.C. §102(b)

Claims 1 and 16 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by *Kawata et al.* (US 2004/0004688), hereinafter referred to as *Kawata*.

Independent Claim 1:

Independent claim 1 requires in part:

An elliptically polarizing plate comprising a polarizer, a protective layer formed on one side of the polarizer, a first birefringent layer serving as a $\lambda/2$ plate, and a second birefringent layer serving as a $\lambda/4$ plate in the order given,

wherein the first birefringent layer and the second birefringent layer are each formed by using a liquid crystal material, and wherein a slow axis of the first birefringent layer is defined at one angle of +21° to +27° and -21° to -27° with respect to an absorption axis of the polarizer.

An elliptically polarizing plate of the present invention includes polarizer, a protective layer formed on one side of the polarizer, a first birefringent layer serving as a $\lambda/2$ plate, and a second birefringent layer serving as a $\lambda/4$ plate in the order given. The first birefringent layer and the second birefringent layer are each formed by using a liquid crystal material. A slow axis of the first birefringent layer is defined at one angle of +21° to +27° and -21° to -27° with respect to an absorption axis of the polarizer.

As a result, an elliptically polarizing plate of the present invention has a particular effect in that a light leakage in black image can be prevented effectively. This effect is shown in Table 4. The transmittance data with the angle α of +13°, -13°, +33°, or -33° is **0.13% or more**, and the transmittance data with the angle α of +23° or -23° is **0.10% or less**. Although the difference of 0.03% for the transmittance is small at a glance, the difference of 0.03% for the transmittance is a remarkable difference in view of prevention of a light leakage in black image at practical use of the elliptically polarizing plate. Please note that the transmittance data of A16 in Table 4 is typographical error (correct data is about 0.14; please see A13 and A14).

Such an effect of prevention of a light leakage in black image by controlling the angle α is not disclosed in *Kawata* and *Tillin* (US 6,577,364). Moreover, *Kawata* and *Tillin* do not suggest such an effect of prevention of a light leakage in black image by controlling the angle α .

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Response
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Dependent Claims 2, 3, 5 and 16-18:

As the dependent claims depend from independent claim 1, the remarks presented above regarding independent claim 1 also apply to its dependent claims.

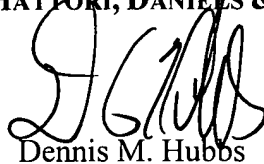
In view of the aforementioned amendments and accompanying remarks, Applicants submit that the claims, as herein amended, are in condition for allowance. Applicants request such action at an early date.

If the Examiner believes that this application is not now in condition for allowance, the Examiner is requested to contact Applicants' undersigned attorney to arrange for an interview to expedite the disposition of this case.

If this paper is not timely filed, Applicants respectfully petition for an appropriate extension of time. The fees for such an extension or any other fees that may be due with respect to this paper may be charged to Deposit Account No. 50-2866.

Respectfully submitted,

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